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only giving birth to girls." Another states: "If a girl is begotten she is useless; if a boy is begotten he is an asset." Yet another proverb puts it thus: "Girls are a disappointment, but the eldest son is like a hearth." Daughters are accordingly cared for less well than sons during infancy, particularly if the couple already have several daughters. Nonethelesss there is no evidence of the female infanticide that used to be practised by Todas.

> The Badagas will welcome the birth of a son or a daughter with equal gladness. The most probable reason for this is that while Hindus see an increasing burden and expense with the hbirt of a daughter, the Badagas see a future livelihood because the daughter as well as the son helps in the fields. (Rhiem 1900: 503)

Even if they are a blessing, "One who has given birth is seven times as ill-fated as one who is without children:" they can be very troublesome!

If a child is deformed since before the birth, that is God's will and nothing can be done about it; but if any damage was done to the baby during the delivery, that can perhaps be rectified. Immediately after the delivery the midwife checks that all the limbs are in order, and at this time can squeeze the head to make it rounder if it seems very long, or can pinch up the nose if it looks flattened.

If a child is born deformed but living, it is believed that either its parents or its patrilineal ancestors committed some great sin; whereas if the deformed child is born dead no such sin was involved. Many Badagas are born with eleven fingers or toes; but this minor matter is considered to be neither lucky nor inauspicious. Badly deformed children of either sex are still encouraged to live and are not done away with; this is even more true of twins, who bring more respect to the parents than a single birth would. However, children blind or deformed from birth are extremely rare, and giants are unknown among the Badagas; dwarfs occasionally are found. One man, about a metre high, was briefly married and divorced, was a highly respected man who took an active part in the village council, and died in his sixties. He was nicknamed "Groundling" but was respected because his conduct was excellent and he came from a good family. He had several brothers of normal stature but was respected more than they were.

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Principles of Child Care

5.7. Underlying the practice of caring for children are certain core values about the human body which Badaga encapsulate in a few proverbs and can sometimes be persuaded to talk about. What some of these proverbs point to is a need to accept human diversity, and even deformity. One asks rhetorically, "Will all begotten children be real children?" And another proverb makes the same comment in reference to dissimilarities between siblings: "The stomach that has given birth to various people is one; those people are of different sense and different complexion." Similarly, "Are there five even fingers?" Deformities in children are not of course welcomed—"It is bad if you have a lame child; it is bad if you see a blind man"—yet the individual should not feel embarrassed about a defect: "After the boils have formed, what if you feel shy and repugnant about them?" Chronic illness also has to be tolerated in relatives and treated: "Even if she coughs she is our woman; even if she looks thin she is a grander woman."

Several proverbs reflect a concern with that hardy anthropological question, the relative strength and influence of nurture and of nature in the individual's personality: "Even if one has forgotten one's own begotten children, one won't forget learnt [bad] habits;" the latter are more important than inborn senses. Indeed, some people would go blind rather than give up a bad habit: "Even if your eyes become black a learnt [bad] habit won't disappear." In direct contrast, though, "Inborn habits won't go away even if you burn a man." Badagas believe that inborn habits (*huttu buddi*) are permanent, whereas learnt ones (*katta buddi*) are not.

A number of proverbs relate to the family relationships that involve children, and the way youngesters should be brought up. A certain firmness is counseled: "Children should be brought up under control, and a disobedient wife should have been sent back home." Similarly, "It is said, if the children are to be good, the mother should be good enough [herself]". Badagas believe that children acquire their qualities from the mother. Even so, "That woman will not know the nature of the girl she gave birth to." Kindness and forgiveness are valued in dealing with children. Thus, "If we caress the head of an orphan boy, our own children will grow up of their own accord" (Metz 1864: 94); "Will a child die from the stripes of a mother?" (Metz 1864: 97); "Cats and

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dried further. Finally the patient swallowed the pieces without chewing them first, so that their sharp edges would cut off any parts of the tonsil that remained. The pieces were swallowed before each of the next two meals following the operation. After this the patient just took the ordinary meals, but was advised to wash his mouth out with salty water for one or two days.

757 (825) **COUGH** (*kemmalu*)

5.29. The blood of a hare (*Lepus nigricollis*) used to be given as a throat medicine to children suffering from a cough (Thurston 1912: 85). Today the stem of a peacock feather is used instead to cure a cough or cold in young children. It is rubbed on a stone to produce a minute amount of powder, which is then mixed with powdered rhizome of the sweet flag and a little honey, and swallowed by the child. For babies, however, nothing but a half teaspoonful of honey is given, and for children between one and four years this is increased to a full teaspoonful. Only the honey from sealed cells of honeycomb is used as a cough medicine, although Badagas do use the honey from unsealed cells as a foodstuff.

755 **SINGULTUS** (*selamudalu*)

5.30. Someone should blow in an infant's ear to cure its hiccups. If this is not successful, then one blows on the top of its head.

757 825 **PERTUSSIS** (*kokkare*)

5.31. The flesh of the Nilgiri langur (*Presbytis johnii*) used to be sold in local bazaars as a cure for whooping-cough (Thurston 1906: 271); I have heard that it is still available, although illegally so since the animal became a protected species.

856 755 732 (826) (854) **RICKETS** (*sotte*)

5.32. If a baby is born with its limbs bent nothing can be done about it, although massage will be attempted in infancy, as we mentioned above (5.10). If it is thought there is no strength in the waist "because of the nerves in the hip," a treatment can be tried. Instead of bathing the baby in regular hot water, some water in which rice or preferably little millet, has been cleaned is kept, and each evening for a week or two this is heated for the daily

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bath. When near body temperature the water is splashed onto the hips and waist by hand, and this area becomes stronger. The baby is not immersed in the water.

5.33. If the legs are weak they will bend when the child begins to walk, and so they must first be strengthened. To do this a long leaf of aloe is needed: all the spikes are cut off it, then it is heated over the fire and twisted tightly to squeeze out the juice. *Hulla majjige* (the name of several species of sorrel) is also ground up and its juice collected. Some salt and a small amount of wood ash from the hearth are mixed in with these juices, and the resultant liquid boiled until all that remains is a glassful of very thick paste. This is smeared all over the baby's legs up to the waist. It is left on, and more of the same concoction is added every morning and evening for the next three days, without any of it being cleaned away. On the third or fourth day the dry paste is cleaned off, and the baby rests for two or three days. Then the whole process is repeated. Four of five such series of treatments are given over a month, and afterwards the child should be able to walk alright. If it still cannot walk properly, however, this means that the bone has been bent since birth and no remedy is possible.

CONSTIPATION (*se:dalu*) 757

5.34. When a small child is constipated someone takes the rib of a tobacco leaf, rolls it between her hands a bit to remove any sharpnesses, and dips it in castor oil (or formerly gingelly oil). Several people hold the child still while the woman gently pushes the rib into the rectum, after which the child eases himself.

ENURESIS (*maggilucce*) 757 755

5.35. Some young children pass small amounts of urine every few minutes and wet the bed at night. If it is a mere infant three fingers wetted with castor or gingelly oil are put in its mouth to suck. A somewhat older child is given a half teaspoonful of the oil to drink.

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of the vegetables he has frequently eaten. However Badagas are not in full agreement as to whether this works. Another treatment for the illness involves a therapist. She feels around the forehead on the side where the pain occurs until she can take hold of a "nerve" (sic!) just above the eye. This is then neatly incised with a razor. Despite the bleeding that follows, in most cases, the patient is cured. Sufferers nowadays tend to go to a hospital for treatment, however.

HEADACHE (*mandɐ:ru*)

Until early in this century therapists cured headaches by making patients swallow a paste they made from common vetch; now they use such pills as aspirin instead.

Ears

DEAFNESS (*kivudu*) [732] [539]

6.27. There is no cure for deafness, and so a child deaf from birth will be treated as though dumb. People with wax in the ear may become deaf because they break the drum while trying to clean it. A proverb which relates this fact to the use of another stick as a toothbrush warns, "The teeth are spoiled by not using a stick; the ears are spoiled by using a stick." Nevertheless, the ears are sometimes cleaned out with little sticks, perhaps with a fragment of cloth wrapped around the end: *hasini* is a species often used, and nowadays metal scrapers are too.

6.28. Earache will pass away, but can also be cured by irrigation. To do this, someone takes a small red chili, cuts off one end and removes the seeds. Using it as a cup, a small amount of any kind of oil is poured into the chili. It is held near the hearth or a flame until it is warm. Then the patient lies on his side and one or two drops of the warm oil are poured into the ear. This usually cures the ache; but if not, and if there is wax inside, the ear must be washed out with hot water.

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Eyesight

732 BAD VISION

6.29. Badagas can test their eyesight with the help of the moon. On the night of the new moon or the one after that a man is asked if he can see a small line on the lower edge of the moon while it is low in the sky. If he cannot see this, his sight is defective. He must then take a leaf of the castor-oil plant or "some other jungle plant," and keep it on the top of his head for a month, after which he is tested again. "This cure has been known to work sometimes," I am told.

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6.30. When insects and other small objects get into the eye, somebody blows on a piece of cloth—such as the corner of a loincloth — and when it is warm he wipes the surface of the sufferer's eye with it.

732 BLINDNESS (*kurudu*)

6.31. Badagas have no cure for blindness, and if the sight is defective glasses are nowadays the only normal remedy. One can even find ready-made glasses of varying prescriptions in the bazaars. It is generally believed that if one prays to the sun at sunrise while looking into it, vision will remain good. The deaf and the blind cannot enjoy life, as one proverb maintains: "For a man without ears, what use is a musical instrument? For a man without eyes, what use is the countryside?"

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164 757 TRACHOMA OR CONJUNCTIVITIS (*keppu kaṇṇu*)

6.32. If the eye turns red, it is because there is too much "heat" in the body: this can be lessened by extra sleep and a change of diet. The patient should also bathe two or three times daily, using the bark of pellitory as soap: it is "cooling" to the eye and the brain, and so brings health.

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6.33. If there is a pain behind the eye, the patient lies on his back with eyes wide open. The best cure is then to squirt five to ten shots of milk directly from a buffalo's teat into his eye: failing buffalo's milk, cow's milk can be administered in the same way. (Only very gentle cattle can be trusted not to step on the patient.) A simpler but less effective treatment is for a woman to squirt five to ten shots

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the disease is quite advanced a third dose is taken before the midday meal. After swallowing the medicine the patient must rest for at least a half hour before eating.

There is a treatment to prevent *ma:dua*, in the form of ginger rhizome. It must be rubbed on the teeth for up to an hour whenever the patient has time. If he does not take care of the mouth in this way, the disease can eat into the lip to cause hare-lip. It must be treated in the early stages because if left for even a week it can become very dangerous. Should it spread from the mouth to the stomach it can kill a child; as there is no effective medicine for *ma:dua* once it has reached the stomach.

The disease also spreads very quickly from the mouth to the nose, and can eat the nose away. Although recognized to be the same disease it is then called *pi:nasi*, and is treated with an extra medicine. This is put in the nostrils and onto the exterior by a specialist who may treat the patient for several weeks. I was unable to learn about its composition.

6.40. While *ma:dua* is not very contagious, there is another disease called *be:koko* which is highly contagious, and is passed to others on the eating and drinking vessels. It develops in the opposite way from *ma:dua*, starting in the stomach and spreading to the mouth. It is characterized by itching in the mouth, and is not very dangerous. Since the illness is caused by excessive "heat" in the body, everything possible is done to cool the body. Thus the patient has to be washed with *toreko:lu* bark to cool his head; he eats "cooling" foods; and swallows the *aṇila kae* and nutmeg powdered in milk.

TONSILITIS (*tonde kaṭalu*)

6.41. To cure swollen tonsils, a medicine made of leaves of thorn-apple is administered. In extreme cases the therapist removes the tonsils with two sharpened finger-nails of the left hand (cf. 5.28).

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754 (*c*) Illness can also be the work of non-Badaga shamans or
177 sorcerers, who can send a bad spirit into the victim. As with ghost
753 possession, it has to be removed by an exorcist who knows the
[755] appropriate spells. It is said that in earlier days every Kurumba who had learnt sorcery was allowed to try his power sout. This would be decided by a formal council of the tribe, who would give the novices a stipulated period, usually one to four weeks, during which the young men could test their abilities. The Badagas would then be warned of what was to come, so the villagers could take every precaution and stay indoors at night. Each youth was permitted to kill one man by sorcery during this period. Deaths in the
[761] Badaga community were also occasionally ascribed to the sorcery of Todas (Rivers 1906: 261, 635); and Kurumbas say there are many Badaga sorcerers too.

828 (*d*) Emotional and mental problems are otherwise said to be the
753 result of sins done by a man's ancestors, whereas bodily diseases
783 are in most cases an effect of the patient's own sins, as in the case of ulceration cited below (see *i*). Thus if the wealthy man becomes poor, or a poor man becomes rich, he attributes the change of fortune to the deeds of his ancestors. If a man lacks appetite, or does not enjoy his life or possessions, then he has a sickness resulting from the sins of his ancestors. There is no cure for it; and so if many cures are attempted and none works, it is thereby known that he has an illness caused by ancestral sin. Leprosy and mental diseases are seen as ultimately caused by that same sin. (As an explanation for the therapist's impotence this is of course very effective.)

•732 (*e*) Often we find frequency of an infirmity being explained as
826 an effect of "blood." For example, in one family there are two girls and five boys. One boy and both girls are normal, but three other boys are deaf and dumb, and one is fairly deaf but can talk. As the situation was explained to me, "there must be some wrong in the parents' blood." This is perhaps still an allusion to ancestral sin.

753 (*f*) More immediate causes of some illnesses lie in one's diet or
261 bodily activities, even in uncleanliness. Among the dietary problems there is a general malady called *so:lu*, "over-heat," caused by eating insufficient milk products. Eating bad food, or eating too quickly, can also bring unfortunate results.

753 (*g*) Over-exertion may dislodge the colon or an artery and bring
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